AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1 (Currently amended). A method of preserving bodily protein stores in a catabolic patient, comprising the concomitant and separate administration of a pair of pharmaceutical agents consisting essentially of (a) a first composition containing at least one of α-ketoglutarate and α-ketoglutaric acid and being devoid of ammonium, and (b) a second composition containing ammonium and being devoid of a α-ketoglutarate and α-ketoglutaric acid, the amounts of the pair being effective to preserve skeletal muscle, wherein any composition administered containing at least one of α-ketoglutarate and α-ketoglutaric acid is devoid of ammonium.

2 (Previously presented). The method of claim 1, wherein the administration of (a) or (b) or both lasts for more than one hour.

3 (Canceled).

4 (Previously presented). The method of claim 2, wherein the concomitant administration lasts for more than 6 hours but less than 36 hours.

5 (Previously presented). The method of claim 1, wherein the administration is to a patient having undergone trauma or surgery and the administration is intermittent or continuous for at least three days of the posttraumatic/postoperative period during which the patient is in a catabolic state.

6 (Original). The method of claim 1, wherein administration is by infusion.

7 (Original). The method of claim 6, wherein the amount of infusion administrated of (a) is from 0.02 1mol·kg^{-1}·min^{-1} to 30 1mol·kg^{-1}·min^{-1}.

8 (Previously presented). The method of claim 7, wherein the amount of infusion administrated of (a) is from 0.5 1mol·kg^{-1}·min^{-1} to 15 1mol·kg^{-1}·min^{-1}.

9 (Previously presented). The method of claim 6, wherein the amount of infusion administrated of NH_4^+ is from 0.5 1mol·kg^{-1}·min^{-1} to 20 1mol·kg^{-1}·min^{-1}.

10 (Previously presented). The method of claim 9, wherein the amount of infusion administrated of NH_4^+ is from 1 1mol·kg^{-1}·min^{-1} to 10 1mol·kg^{-1}·min^{-1}.

11 (Previously presented). The method of claim 9, wherein the amount of infusion administrated of NH_4^+ is increased over the period of administration.

12 (Previously presented). The method of claim 11, wherein the amount of infusion administrated of (a) is from 0.02 1mol·kg^{-1}·min^{-1} to 30 1mol·kg^{-1}·min^{-1}.

13 (Original). The method of claim 11, wherein said increase is by a factor of from 1.5 to 8.

14 (Original). The method of claim 13, wherein said increase is by a factor of from 2 to 5.

15 (Currently amended). A pharmaceutical dosage unit comprising a first and second separate pharmaceutical compositions, the first composition comprising at least

one of α-ketoglutarate and α-ketoglutaric acid in a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier and being devoid of ammonium, and [[a]] the second pharmaceutical composition comprising ammonium in a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier and being devoid of α-ketoglutarate and α-ketoglutaric acid, the total amount of the at least one of α-ketoglutarate and α-ketoglutaric acid and the ammonium being effective to preserve skeletal muscle, and wherein the amount administrated of said at least one of α-ketoglutarate and α-ketoglutaric acid is from 0.02 $1mol,kg^{-1},min^{-1}$ to 30 $1mol,kg^{-1},min^{-1}$ and the amount of infusion administrated of NH_4^+ is from 0.5 $1mol,kg^{-1},min^{-1}$ to 20 $1mol,kg^{-1},min^{-1}$.

16 (Previously presented). The unit of claim 15, wherein both carriers are an infusion carrier.

17 (Previously presented). The unit of claim 15, wherein both carriers are an oral carrier.

18 (Previously presented). The unit of claim 15, wherein the α-ketoglutarate is in form of its sodium.

19 (Previously presented). The unit of claim 15, wherein ammonium is in form of its chloride.

20 (Previously presented). The method of 1, wherein the ammonium is ammonium chloride.

21 (Previously presented). The method of claim 20, wherein the administration of (a) or (b) or both lasts for more than one hour.